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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God of love, may Your presence fill our lawmakers with Your wisdom and power. May Your wisdom lead them away from the pitfalls of delayed obedience so that they will seek to promptly do Your will. Lord, make them a source of strength. Direct their actions; motivate their hearts, as they seek to begin this day with an unreserved commitment to You. God, give them Your supernatural power, wisdom, and guidance, for You know them, their needs, their motives, their hopes, and their fears.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 19, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

BRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour; the Republicans will control the first half, the majority the second half.

Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the supplemental appropriations bill. I mentioned last night we are going to have to move forward on this bill. I have been told the Republicans want to have a substitute, and we look forward to whatever that might be. We can set up a series of votes to satisfy those people who want to change this bill in some manner.

I would note that in the Northeast—other States but principally New York and New Jersey—there are about 700,000 people who have lost their homes. Tens of thousands of those homes have been destroyed, and other people are still living in very difficult situations.

When we had the devastation in the Gulf, we got the aid to those States very quickly. The population of those States—Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama—is very sparse compared to New York and New Jersey. We have to make a decision on this very important legislation before we leave this week, and we are going to do that. I hope everyone would cooperate, but we have to do

this. It is very unfair to the millions of people who are suffering as a result of this devastation.

We have had some devastating wildfires in the West. They are terribly damaging to the environment and on occasion there is lost life and often there are property losses. But relatively speaking, compared to the millions of people involved in this storm, we have to get our priorities right. It is unfair to those people who are suffering. It is not only individual people, but it is also businesses. I hope we can finalize this matter in the next day or two.

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

KENT CONRAD

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is often said a man is only as good as his word. In this new world we live in, the same applies to women. This is a world we live in where men and women, as much as we can, are treated equally. A good man is somebody who has his word that is good. A good woman is a person who has their word that is good. I believe that is true.

If that fact is true, then Mr. KENT CONRAD, the Senior Senator from North Dakota, is a good man, indeed.

When he was running for the Senate the first time, he promised the people of North Dakota he would not run for reelection if the Nation's budget deficit was higher at the end of his term than at the beginning of it.

We came to the Senate together. I can remember 27 years ago in the LBJ Room where I first met KENT CONRAD—we were running for the Senate—this studious man, very intense. I can still remember that. We have been friends now for all those many years. But think what he did. He could have been reelected so easily and he probably could have figured out some way around it: It was my intention to reduce the debt, but we weren't able to do it.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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